

Ivan Iwannado



Ivan Iwannado knows what he wants to do, but like most of us he'll take a while to figure out how to do it. Learn from his mistakes

THIS MONTH:

IVAN GETS IN SHAPE

Now that Christmas is behind us and spring is hopefully on its way, Ivan Iwannado has decided that he has to get fit. All those mince pies and comforting food in the cold weather have had a terrible effect on Ivan's waistline, so this spring he's decided that there's nothing else for it. He's going to have to improve his fitness and health and become a bit less well padded. What Ivan wants to know is how his trusty PC can help in this quest for fitness.

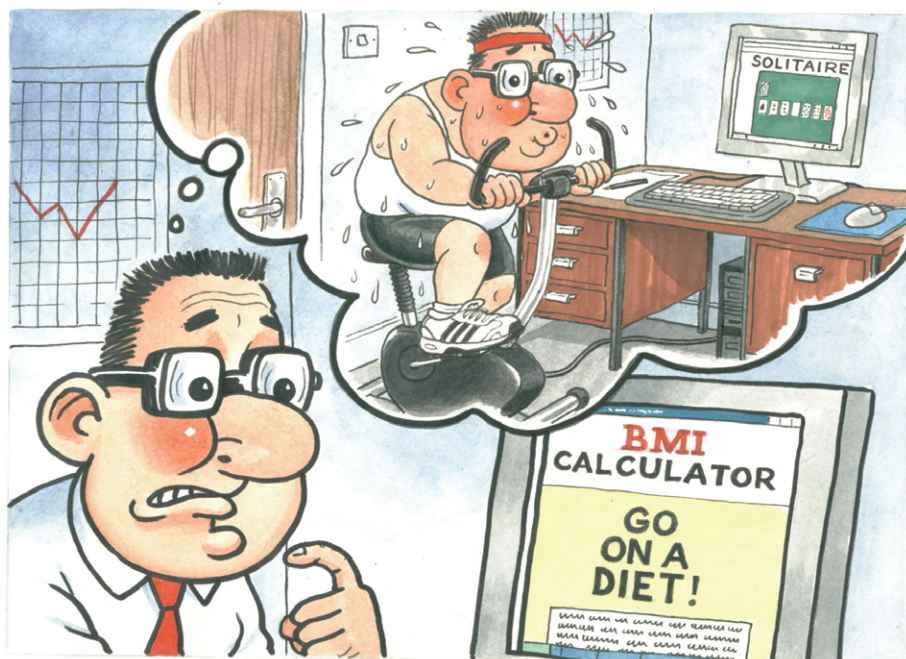
Maybe Ivan could link an exercise bike with a dynamo to generate electricity for his PC? Though on second thoughts, maybe not. There is an argument that Ivan would be better off if his trusty PC broke down because then he might spend less time reading newsgroups and playing Solitaire and more time out exercising. Fortunately, there are ways that Ivan can use his PC to get fitter. For a start, he can use the PC to find out just how unfit he really is. There are some great websites that have fitness calculators. Ivan could try www.shape.com or www.self.com, both of which have body mass index (BMI) calculators that will tell Ivan how bad things have got.

They're a bit girly, aren't they? Great if Irena wants advice, but Ivan was hoping for a rather more manly site.

The BMI calculator will give the same bad news whatever site it's on, sadly. But if Ivan wants something less girly, he could try the BBC's health pages. There's a BMI calculator at www.bbc.co.uk/health/healthy_living/your_weight/index.shtml.

Drat, you're right. It's just as rude about Ivan's BMI. Drastic action is obviously required. Ivan's going to go on a diet and do some exercise. How can he find out which form of exercise will work best?

There are lots of online calculators showing Ivan how many calories he might burn, such as www.caloriesperhour.com. Calories per hour has a comprehensive list of activities, so if Ivan wants to work out how many calories he'd burn if he spent an hour cleaning out his garage or ice



skating at less than 9mph then he will find the figures here.

Good grief. Ivan's never even heard of some of these activities – are they all legal? OK, Ivan can find out how many calories he'd burn. What about working out his diet?

There are lots of sites offering advice on what to eat, but there are also several online dieting clubs. This is one area that's become much more popular online, presumably because it's less embarrassing to fill in an online form than it is to turn up at a class. The snag is that the very fact you're going to a real class is an added incentive to keep trying – only Ivan could know whether he'd keep to the regime if he could lie about how much weight he's lost this week. Weightwatchers offers an online option at www.weightwatchers.com. EDiets (www.ediets.com) is perhaps the best-known online diet site. It offers online support day or night, and a community of other dieters you can chat to online.

Flipping heck – Ivan would have to spend money to sign up to one of those sites. Aren't there any less expensive options?

Well, there is an argument that spending money helps you commit to dieting and keep going. But if Ivan really wants to be a skinflint, there are dieting newsgroups that might offer moral support for him. Newsgroups can be browsed easily at

<http://groups.google.co.uk>. Alt.support.diet and its weightwatchers subgroup have very regular postings. Many fitness websites have an option to send you a daily email, which might give Ivan a reminder that he's meant to be getting healthy, and some ideas on things that might help.

What else can Ivan do using his PC?

There are three main things that will definitely help Ivan's fitness campaign. First, he should set himself some goals and add them as daily reminders to his personal organiser so he is reminded every day of what he wants to achieve. The trendy jargon is to set goals that are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic with a Time frame. Ivan might, for instance, set a goal that he's going to lose seven pounds by the beginning of May by walking to work, giving him 40 minutes of exercise five days a week. The next step would be to create a weight loss spreadsheet showing his weight and the date, so that he can plot a chart showing how much weight he's lost since starting the regime. Finally, he should keep an online exercise and food diary saying what he ate each day, what exercise he took and how he felt – all simple stuff, but likely to help him keep going during the tough times.

Ivan isn't a particularly happy man. He knows from experience that getting fit isn't easy, but he's going to give it a go, and will use all the help his computer can give him. 

Nigel Knowitall

If you want to get something done using software but are unsure how to do it, fear not — help is at hand from our resident expert, Nigel Knowitall



SELECTION OBJECT PROBLEMS

Q I'm writing a macro in Microsoft Word 2002 and I want to be able to carry out actions on multiple objects throughout the document that have been selected by the user. When I try to use the Selection method with Selection.Text, it always selects the last item that was selected in the document. In particular, when I try to count the words in the subsections, it gives the wrong answer, always showing me the answer for the final subsection alone.

How do I get it to select the first item, then work through each item in turn so that I can display their word counts individually?

Adrian Peters

A Unfortunately, you've fallen foul of Microsoft's inconsistent handling of the Selection object. Some methods and properties of the Selection object are applied to all the subranges selected by the user, so if you want to apply bold or italic effects, change the size, clear the formatting or set the borders, you can do so easily with a complex selection. In theory, the Find operation should also work with complex selections, but in practice the subranges tend to become de-selected.

As you've discovered, the count operations for words, characters and bookmarks are applied only to the final subrange. Other methods give a run-time error telling you that the method is not available.

The standard workaround is to mark your complex selection using character formatting. This might sound strange, and it could affect the formatting of your document, but it achieves the result you want. Remember that most of the

formatting methods of the Selection object work properly on all the selected text.

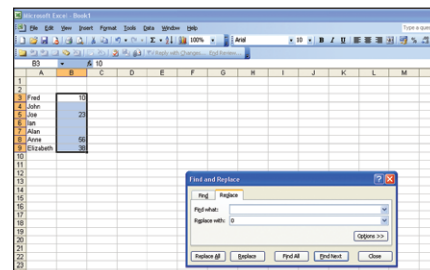
In the macro below, we've chosen to change the colour of the text in the selected ranges to tan — not a colour that's used very often. An alternative method would be to set up a character style that's visually identical to normal text, and change the character style of all the text in the selected ranges to your new character style. Neither method is ideal, because it can wipe out existing formatting:

```
Sub sepranges()  
Dim rSep As Range  
Set rSep = ActiveDocument.Range  
Selection.Font.Color = wdColorTan  
  
With rSep.Find  
.Font.Color = wdColorTan  
.Format = True  
rSep.Find.Execute  
iCount = 1  
iTotWords = 0  
While rSep.Find.Found  
iWdcount = rSep.Words.Count  
iTotWords = iTotWords + iWdcount  
MsgBox ("Words in Section " &  
Str(iCount) & " is " &  
Str(iWdcount))  
iCount = iCount + 1  
rSep.Font.Color = wdColorAutomatic  
rSep.Collapse wdCollapseEnd  
rSep.Find.Execute  
Wend  
End With  
MsgBox ("total words in ranges is " &  
Str(iTotWords))  
End Sub
```

The first thing this macro does is create a Range object that spans all the elements of the selection. Then the colour of all the text in the selection is set to tan.

Range objects have a Find property that can be used to look for any subrange that has a particular set of properties, including a particular character style or colour. Each time a subrange is found that matches the tan colour, you can work on that range and do whatever editing you want.

In our case, we want to show the word counts for the individual sections. As well as showing the word count for the current section, we've also added it to an overall count so that at the end of the macro, the user can see the overall word count for the subranges they've selected. Each time the count has been made, the colour of the text is set back to the automatic colour for the document, and that subselection is removed from the Range using the Collapse method.



Use Excel's Find and Replace to replace blanks with zeros

USING FIND AND REPLACE TO ENTER TEXT IN EXCEL

Q I keep track of students' marks using Excel. When a student completes an optional assignment, I type their mark into the appropriate cell in Excel. These entries are used in various calculations that require a numeric entry in all cells.

As the assignments are optional, not all students complete them. I currently have to trawl through several pages of entries and insert a zero into any blank cells. Is there a way to do this automatically?

Mike Peel

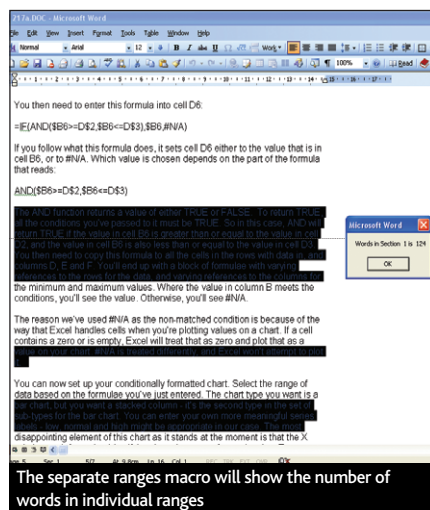
A The quickest way is with Excel's Find and Replace feature. Select the entire range of cells containing the marks. Choose the Find option from the Edit menu. Leave the Find what box empty, and type a zero in the Replace box. If you then click Replace All, your empty cells will have a zero inserted into them.

CONDITIONAL FORMATTING IN CHARTS

Q I'm using Excel to show sales results. On my worksheets, I highlight important results using conditional formatting. Ideally, I'd like a similar facility in my charts, so that the colour of the bars on the charts varies depending on the value.

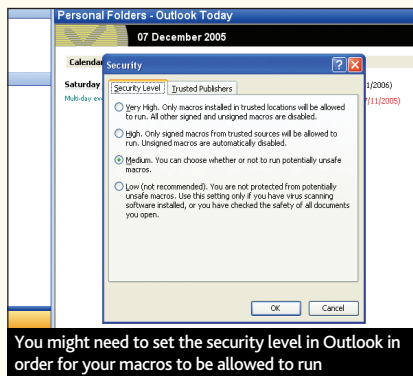
Simon McCloud

A There are two ways to achieve this. You can write a macro to set the colours of the segments, but this can be slow on charts that have lots of values plotted. An alternative method avoids VBA, but you have to create new data ranges behind the scenes. Suppose you have values between zero and 100, and you want to show any values below 25 in red, values between 26 and 74 in blue, and values between 75 and 100 in green. We'll assume that your data values are held in column B, starting at cell B6, with the text identifying the entries in column A. So you might have entries such as:

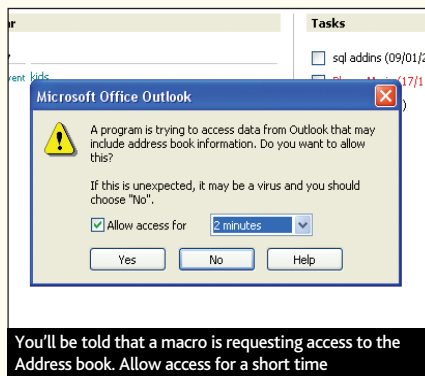




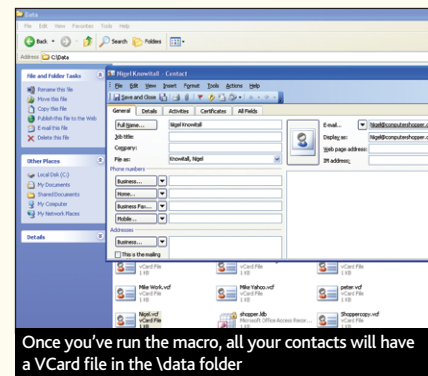
CREATING A MACRO TO EXPORT CONTACTS



You might need to set the security level in Outlook in order for your macros to be allowed to run



You'll be told that a macro is requesting access to the Address book. Allow access for a short time



Once you've run the macro, all your contacts will have a VCard file in the \data folder

Q Is there a way of exporting contacts in Outlook 2003 to VCF files? The Import/Export dialog allows only limited exports. You can export each contact by right-clicking, but that's not much use. Name not supplied

A The only way to do this is by writing a macro. Go to Tools, Macro, Macros, enter a name for your macro and press Create. The following routine exports all the items in the default Contacts folder to VCards stored in a folder called \data on the C drive:

```
Sub YourMacroName()  
Dim myObj As Outlook.Application  
Dim myNamespace As Outlook.Namespace  
Set myObj = CreateObject("Outlook.Application")  
Set myNamespace = myObj.GetNamespace("MAPI")  
Set myFolder = myNamespace.GetDefault
```

```
Folder(olFolderContacts)  
Set myFolderItems = myFolder.Items  
iCount = myFolderItems.Count  
For x = 1 To iCount  
    myname = myFolderItems.Item(x).FullName  
    myFolderItems.Item(x).SaveAs "c:\data\" & myname & ".vcf", olVCard  
Next x  
End Sub
```

This macro starts by creating two variables. The first, myObj, points at the Outlook application. Because Outlook is a standard Messaging Application Programming Interface (MAPI) client, it provides an interface for accessing its data called the MAPI namespace. The second variable is set to this MAPI namespace, thereby providing access to all Outlook data stored in the user's mail stores.

Once the namespace object is created, we get the default Contacts folder, using GetDefaultFolder. We find out how many items it has in it using:

```
Set myFolderItems = myFolder.Items  
iCount = myFolderItems.Count
```

The macro then uses a For loop to work through these items one at a time. The full name of the contact is used as the filename for the exported VCard. Then the SaveAs method saves the data from the Contact into a file in the C:\Data folder. The name of the file is the full name of the contact with the extension .vcf to signify a VCard.

If you discover that your copy of Outlook has macros disabled, you need to enable them on the Tools, Macro, Security menu. Choose a macro level of Medium rather than High, so you can decide which macros to run. You'll then need to restart Outlook before your choice is activated.

Prior to running the macro, you must create an empty folder called Data in your C: drive's root directory. Run the macro by going to Tools, Macro, and double-clicking it. You'll be told that a macro is requesting access to the Address book. Allow access for a suitably short time.

A	B
Salesperson	Total sales
Fred	26
Joe	5
Bill	56
Ian	76
Jim	23
Anne	88
Elaine	75
Peter	30

Set up an area where you can enter the values that define what is low, normal and high by entering the minimum and maximum value for each group. We used the cells D2:F3 to hold these cut-off points:

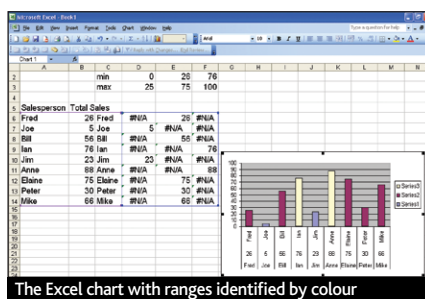
D	E	F
0	26	76
25	75	100

Then enter this formula into cell D6:

```
=IF(AND($B>=D$2,$B<=D$3),$B,#N/A)
```

This sets cell D6 either to the value that is in cell B6, or to #N/A. Which value is chosen depends on the part of the formula that reads:

```
AND($B>=D$2,$B<=D$3)
```



The Excel chart with ranges identified by colour

The AND function returns a value of either TRUE or FALSE. To return TRUE, all the conditions in the brackets must be true. So in this case, AND will return TRUE if the value in cell B6 is greater than or equal to the value in cell D2, and the value in cell B6 is also less than or equal to the value in cell D3. You then need to copy this formula down column D to the bottom row with data in, and across columns E and F. You'll end up with a block of formulae with varying references to the rows for the data and to the columns for the values. Where the value in column B meets the conditions, you'll see the value. Otherwise, you'll see #N/A.

We can now graph the data in columns D to F to produce a colour-coded chart. Though we're plotting a bigger region of the spreadsheet we'll get the same number of bars because of the way

that Excel handles the value #N/A. Wherever Excel encounters #N/A, it won't attempt to plot a value. If we had specified a zero value or empty string for these cells, Excel would plot them on the chart.

To create the chart, select the range containing the IF formulae you've entered. The chart type you want is a bar chart with a stacked column, which is second in the set of sub-types for bar charts. You can enter your own more meaningful labels; low, normal and high might be appropriate in our case.

The most disappointing element of this chart as it stands is that the X axis has no information identifying the salesperson. To fix this, copy the salespeople's names into the area in column C that is between the original sales figures and the chart data area. Select the area including the original sales figures, the names in column C, and the formulae in column D, E and F, and you'll get a chart that has a table below it showing to whom the column refers and the amount they sold. **CS**

CONTACT

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